

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

With respect to the examiner's objection to claim 1 because of confusing language applicants have amended claim 1 in the manner suggested by the examiner by use of the word "rotatable" instead of the phrase "located rotatably".

Applicants have also amended claim 6 in response to the rejection for indefiniteness under 35 USC §112 to more clearly define the locking parts. Claim 6 now characterizes the locking parts as respective, engageable and releasable locking parts, and clarified the lock function as a releasable locking engagement of the locking parts. Claim 6 has also been made dependent upon claim 5 to provide the required antecedent basis for the term cover member, as suggested by the examiner.

Prior to discussing the amendments made in response to patents cited by the examiner it may be helpful to briefly review the novel concepts and structure of the present invention.

Applicants disclose and claim a particulate sifter with an axially rotatable net body which is supported and rotatable by a rotatable supporting member. The rotatable supporting member is supported by the casing and is forcibly rotatable by a second motor. The sifter also includes a rotatable shaft with blades, rotatable by a first motor. The blades are arranged to rotate relative to the net body at an inner surface of the net body. Under this arrangement the net body is rotatable independently of the rotatable blades.

The rotatable blades have an advantage of efficiently scraping out particulates from the inside of the net body to the outside of the net body. However, if the net body did not rotate, particulates scraped out from the

upper area of the net body would not fall from the upper side of the net body, and would thus accumulate on the upper area of the outside of the net body, leading to growth of microorganisms in the accumulated particulates.

In the present invention, with the above arrangement, the net body is rotatable independently of the rotatable blades thereby enabling particulates to fall from the upper outside area of the net body. This cooperation between the rotatable net body and the rotatable blades inhibits accumulation of particulates on the outside area of the net body. A further advantage of the claimed invention is that the working life of the net body is increased beyond that of conventional sifters due to rotation of the net body as disclosed in the specification.

With regard to the patents relied on by the examiner to reject applicants' claims, U.S. patent 5,507,396 *Hauch* shows a rotating sizer with screen panels. The rotating sizer 12 includes an inclined rotatable trommel or sizer 10 engaged to a driver 14 shown in Fig. 1. Movement of particulate 22 from an entrance end 26 of the sizer to an exit end 38 is influenced by the downward inclination of the sizer 10 and the rotational movement of the sizer 10 about its inclined axis. *Hauch* does not show or suggest rotatable blades within the space defined by the sizer 10.

U.S. patent 5,458,246 to *Thom* shows a horizontal cylindrical sifter with adjustable agitator arms. The sifter 100 includes cylindrical sifter screens 125 fastened to a housing 120. There is no rotatable movement of the housing 120 and no rotatable movement of the sifter screen 125. However a rotor shaft 140 that extends through the housing 120 is provided with agitator arms 145 that support blades 150 for rotation within the housing 120.

The examiner states that it would be obvious to incorporate *Thom*'s agitator arms and rotatable blades (145, 150) in *Hauch*. Applicants submit that

this combination is not feasible because the trommel 10 of *Hauch* is supported and rotated by the axle 16 that extends through the center of the trommel 10 as disclosed at column 2, line 42 to 46 of *Hauch*, and *Thom's* agitator blades 150 are supported and rotated by drive rotor shaft 140 that also extends through the center of the sifter screen 125. Accordingly, if *Hauch* and *Thom* are combined, the axle 16 of *Hauch* would interfere with the rotor shaft 140 of *Thom*. Such combination is unworkable because a shaft for a net body and another shaft for rotating blades cannot co-exist and operate independently and simultaneously at the center of the net body. Thus there is no logical basis for persons skilled in the art to combine *Hauch* and *Thom*.

In comparison, in applicants' invention, the net body is not supported or rotated by a rotatable shaft. Instead, the net body is supported and rotated by a rotatable supporting member which is supported by the casing. So, in applicants' invention as claimed, rotatable blades extending from the rotatable shaft can be used with the rotatable cylindrical net body.

The examiner also relies on U.S. patent 6,016,921 to *Hauch* which shows a sizing panel for a rotating cylindrical separator. The separator 10 includes sizing panels 30 with indentations or clefts 60 that form cavities or indentations for classifying particulate matter. The separator 10 is not a sieve-like structure.

Applicants submit that none of the patents discussed above, or any of the other patents cited by the examiner, whether considered individually or in combination, show or suggest a particulate sifter that includes a cylindrical net body rotatable by a rotatable supporting member which is supported by said casing and is forcibly rotatable by a second electric motor. Thus the rotatable blades of applicants' device can be combined with

the rotatable cylindrical net body, and the rotatable blades and the cylindrical net body are rotatable independently of each other.

With regard to the claims applicants' claim 1 as amended requires,

"...a cylindrical net body...a rotatable shaft...rotatable by a first electric motor...a rotatable structure, including: said net body; a first ring member...and a second ring member...rotatable blades...supported by...said rotatable shaft, and...positioned to rotate along an inner surface of the net body,...one of said first and second ring members is...rotatable by...a second electric motor...such that said rotatable structure is rotatable around said rotatable shaft independently of said rotatable shaft."

Claim 1 thus requires a cylindrical net body rotatable by a rotatable supporting member which is supported by said casing and is forcibly rotatable by a second electric motor, and rotatable blades extending from a rotatable shaft are forcibly rotatable by a first electric motor such that the net body and rotatable blades are rotatable independently of each other.

Under applicants' claimed arrangement particulates can be scraped out efficiently from the inside of the net body to the outside of the net body by the rotating blades. And at the same time, any gradual accumulation of particulates on the outside of the net body can be removed by rotation of the net body. The working life of the net body is thus increased by not having prolonged contact with particulates on the outside of the net body.

There is no showing or suggestion in the references relied on by the examiner or any of the other references of record of applicants' requirements as claimed in claim 1. It is thus submitted that claim 1 is allowable and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 5 and 6 which directly or indirectly depend on claim 1 are likewise submitted as allowable for the reasons supporting allowance of claim 1 as well as the distinctions defined therein. Allowance of claims 4, 5 and 6 is thus respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: July 17, 2009

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1124-05 Amendment